

TRUTHS

TALKS WITH A BOY



E. B. LOWRY



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TRUTHS

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TRUTHS

TALKS WITH A BOY CONCERNING
HIMSELF

BY
E. B. LOWRY, M. D.



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Dedicated
to the
Men of Tomorrow

PREFACE

DR. CHARLES W. ELIOT, former president of Harvard University, recently said, "The subject of reproduction and sexual hygiene should be more generally presented to young people by parents and teachers. I am convinced that the policy of silence has failed disastrously."

In a recent number of "The Light," the journal of the American Purity Federation, the editor says, "Sex hygiene and morals must be taught in the homes, in the schools, in the churches, just as quickly as there are parents, teachers and

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preachers able to teach. Until then we must depend upon specialists and doctors largely.”

How to present this knowledge to a boy depends upon his age, environment and circumstances. With the very young child, who lives almost entirely in a world of imagination, the poetical fancies often can be used to good advantage. But when the boy has reached a school age and associates with older boys, things begin to assume more natural proportions and the world takes on a more real aspect. Then it is the boy wants more material explanations, demands practical truths. A man can ill-afford to allow vulgar representations of these most sacred truths to be given to his boy by his companions, but he may

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rest assured they will be, and the boy will listen unless this has been forestalled by knowledge given by a wise parent. Fortunate is the boy whose father is a companion to him. The man who can break away from his business cares, become his boy's chum, take long walks with him, talking about the wonders and mysteries of nature, gradually leading up to nature's method of reproducing her kind and teaching him the sacredness of the human body, will be fully repaid for his effort.

When we consider that over forty per cent of the childless homes in the world are due to one of those loathsome diseases called the "black plagues," that seventy per cent of the blindness in the world can be

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traced to the same cause, and that over forty per cent of the operations on the female organs are directly traceable to one of these diseases contracted from the husband, then we realize the need of war on these grim destroyers.

It is a deplorable fact that the prevalence of these diseases might have been prevented by proper instruction of young boys. No man ever wilfully contracted one of these diseases. Statistics tell us that the majority of victims contract them before their twentieth year, before the boy has learned anything of their dangers or perhaps of their existence. The unfortunate victims are again misled in the treatment, for, because of their lack of knowledge, they

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often become the dupes of the unscrupulous.

Many fathers now realize the necessity for this instruction and many are capable of imparting it to their sons. But there are many boys who have no fathers or who, for various reasons, do not receive the proper information. Many mothers must, of necessity, superintend this education of their sons. Often the mother feels that she is incapable of telling the boys what they should be told. With the desire to help fathers and mothers in their work of protecting their sons this little book has been written.

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Upon the hour when I was born,
God said, "Another man shall be,"
And the great Maker did not scorn
Out of himself to fashion me;
He sunned me with his ripening looks,
And heaven's rich instincts in me grew,
As effortless as woodland nooks
Send violets up and paint them blue.

James Russell Lowell.

CHAPTER I

DICK AND HIS UNCLE IN THE WOODS

COME on, Dick, let us go for a walk in the woods. It is too nice a day to sit around the house and I can hear the country calling us. We will go to Hollister's Woods. We will wander about until we are tired, then we will find a cool spot where we can rest and eat this lunch your mother has prepared for us. She always knows just what a boy likes. I would not have thought of a lunch if she had not suggested it.

There are the woods! It is great to live where you can get out into Nature's garden in a few minutes.

I can beat you vaulting that fence. Did n't! Oh, well, I will do it next time if you don't watch out.

Just look at those flowers! Are they not worth coming to see? Before we start home we must gather some for your mother, to show her we can be thoughtful, too, and that we appreciate her thoughtfulness.

What is that you have on your face, Dick? Just pollen from the flowers that is always flying around and getting on your clothes? I wonder if you know what that pollen is for? Nature is such a wise old person that she never makes anything that has not some use, so it would be natural to think the pollen, which is so abundant at this time of the year, was made for a purpose. Let

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us sit down here and rest a few minutes and see where the pollen comes from and where it goes. If we pull off the petals of this flower we find we have a sort of little nest left and inside there are a number of little seeds or ovules. Surrounding this nest are a number of tall filaments, standing up like soldiers protecting their home. On top of each filament is a peculiar basket, called the anther, falling out of which is this yellow dust, or pollen.

Do you know that there are men and women or male and female parts to a plant just the same as there are male and female people? If we look at every plant as a family we can find the father and the mother which belong to each family. The nest con-

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taining the ovules, or seeds, is the mother part of the plant, and the anther containing the pollen is the father part. It takes both parts to make a family, for it is a peculiar fact that although the little seeds are there in the nest, they will not grow and ripen unless some of the pollen reaches them. When some of the pollen has reached an ovule and united with it, we say it is fertilized, and then it can ripen and eventually grow into a new plant.

Now you see that pollen is necessary. But you say you can not see what good it does when it is blown all over. I will tell you something strange. In most instances the pollen from one plant will not fertilize the seeds of the same plant. In or-

der to grow, the ovules must receive pollen from another plant. As the plants are fastened securely in the ground it might look to be a difficult matter for the pollen to go from one plant to another. But the plant is pretty wise and finds methods of sending the pollen to the other plants. It calls on all its friends for help. It shakes out the pollen, which the wind carries all about. Some of it reaches other plants. Of course, a great deal is wasted, but this is provided for by the great amount of pollen grown. The bees and butterflies that come to gather honey from the flowers get the pollen on their wings and carry it to the other flowers they visit. In fact, the flower makes this honey to attract the bees and other

insects so it can send the pollen with them. So you see, this pollen has its use, and if you will remember it as the father part of the plant, I think you will have more respect for it and not call it "horrid stuff."

Well, dear me, here we have talked so long it is about time to go home. Let us hurry and gather some of the prettiest flowers for your mother, then we will have to start home, or we will be too late for dinner.

A man's own observation, what he finds good of, and what he finds hurt of, is the best physic to preserve health.

Bacon.

CHAPTER II

FISHING ON A RAINY DAY

WHAT! Are you cross because you cannot play ball to-day on account of the rain? Well, I will tell you what we can do. If you will put on some old clothes that are past the stage of respectability and will dig some angleworms, I will put on some old clothes, too, and will get the fish lines and tackle ready; then we will go fishing. It is not raining enough to hurt us and you know the fish always bite the best on such a day. I know I can borrow Uncle Ned's old, flat-bottomed boat and we will go out and try our luck. Do you remember those big, forty-pound

“muskies” that were caught up at the lakes last year? It is too bad there is no such lake near here; but, anyway, our river is pretty good and we can have a fine time catching the pickerel and bass. Even if we do not get anything but “pumpkin-seeds,” they will be palatable for dinner. Let us tell your mother she can plan on having fish for dinner to-night, so she will not have other meat cooked.

My, that is a big one! You beat me here, too. Guess I will have to take a back seat when it comes to vaulting fences and fishing. I thought I was pretty good at both of them, too. It will not take many like that to be enough for the family for dinner. Would it not be great if

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we could get a big string? Then we would take some over to old Granny Jones, and poor old Mr. Smith, who broke his leg last week. I think they have a pretty hard time to make both ends meet, and a good mess of fish would be quite a treat for them.

What is that caught on your line? Slime? Don't be too sure. I will wager that if you will take the trouble to examine it you will be rather surprised at what you find. Sure, they are eggs that the mother fish left there to hatch. Do they receive the pollen the same as the flowers? Certainly they do. Only in this case we call it milt. How does it get to the eggs? Well, that is a peculiar thing. The mother fish lays the eggs in the water just as

you see them there. Then she goes away and leaves them; but pretty soon along comes the father fish and swims over them and deposits the milt on them. Then we say they are fertilized the same as the plant seeds were. The father fish takes a little more care of the eggs than the mother does; for in some varieties of fish, such as the stickleback, the father fish remains near the eggs until they are hatched. Isn't that pretty good of him? He seems to care considerably for his babies. Still, he loses sight of them as soon as they are hatched and they never know who is their father or mother.

Well, I think it is about time for us to go home or there will not be time to have these fish cooked for

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dinner. And, besides, your mother will be thinking that she had better get some other meat, after all, as we do not seem to be bringing the fish. She won't? Oh, she knows you would come home in time for her to change her plans if you failed to catch any fish. Well, it is mighty nice for your mother to be able to depend on your word that way. I think she is the kind of a person who would appreciate a reliable boy. You and your mother seem to understand each other pretty well, anyway. There she is now, watching for us. Hold up the fish so she can see them. Then before we change our clothes let us take some over to those two old people, so they can have an enjoyable dinner, too.

Only to the pure and the true does Nature
resign herself and reveal her secrets.

Goethe.

CHAPTER III

THE FROG POND

GOODNESS! What is all that noise? Just frogs! They seem to be having a regular concert. Let us go out and watch them awhile. How fast they jump around! I wonder who can catch one first. There, I won this time! You will have to hurry if you think you can beat me every time. Just look at that old frog on the lily pad. See how contented he seems. One can imagine he thinks he is king of the frog race. There he goes. He can dive better than boys.

Yes, I believe that is the same old

frog again. Oh, no, do not throw a stick at him, for he is not hurting the other frog. I know what he is doing. The other frog is a female frog and she has told him that she is ready to lay some eggs, so he must put some pollen or semen on them. He does this just as they are coming out of the mother's body. So that is what he is doing now.

I wonder if he is one of the kind of frogs that takes good care of their egg babies. You know there is a great difference in frogs. Some take good care of the eggs and some do not. The mother does not seem to pay any attention to them after she lays the eggs, but with some varieties of frogs the father wraps the eggs around his hind legs. Then he buries

THE FROG POND

himself in moist sand until only his head shows. Here he sits motionless for several days; then he crawls out and drags the eggs into a pool or pond, where he very carefully lays them on the sand at the bottom. After he has done this much, he considers that they do not need any further care, so he goes away and leaves them. Other frogs attach the eggs to weeds as soon as they are laid and do not pay any more attention to them.

The toads are very much like the frogs, but sometimes the mother toad takes care of her eggs. One variety of toads has holes in her back. After the eggs are laid and fertilized the father picks them up one at a time and deposits them in the holes in

the mother's back. Then a very thin skin grows over them and holds them in place until they are ready to hatch and break out through the skin.

What peculiar things some of these little animals do and how interesting it is to watch them! When we go home I will loan you a book that will tell you many interesting things about frogs. You will find that there are a great many varieties of frogs. One is called a "policeman," because his plain but brilliant color and metallic stripes give one the impression of a uniform.

Another frog is called the gopher-frog, because, during most of the year, it lives in gopher holes. Then there is the pickerel-frog, so named

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because it is much used as bait for pickerel. In the fishing season so many of these frogs are caught by boys and sold to fishermen that the supply is almost exhausted. Then we are able to see the need of preserving these little animals, for as soon as the frogs become scarce, the country becomes overrun with grasshoppers and our plants suffer. You know the frogs are active hunters, and eat spiders, beetles, crickets, grasshoppers and other small creatures of the ground. They swallow them one after another until unable to hold any more. Sometimes one frog will swallow as many as eight large bugs in a minute.

Did you ever hear of a screaming frog? Well, that simply is a young

green frog. When these young frogs are alarmed they give a short, frightened scream. Another interesting thing about the green frog is that it moults its skin four or more times a year. If the frog is out of the water when the moulting takes place it swallows its skin, as the American toad does. If the moulting takes place in the water the skin floats away in large patches.

Look at that old frog croaking over there. Do you notice the pouch in front? He is able to force that pouch full of air from his lungs, and this aids him in croaking. But there! I will not tell you any more now, but we will go back to the house and get the book I mentioned.

Man is his own star,
And the soul that can
Render an honest
And a perfect man,
Commands all light.

John Fletcher.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHICKEN YARD

WHAT do you think that we are going to do to-day, Dick? Well, your mother has been wanting a new chicken yard for some time, so I think we had better build one, don't you? Then that shiny, black rooster cannot fly out and cause us so much trouble catching him. It was n't any fun to have to spend an hour yesterday trying to get him to return to his home when you were wanting to play ball with the boys. I am sure they missed you, too, for some one told me you were the best pitcher in the crowd. Good for you!

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Look at that old Spanish rooster! What do you suppose he is doing? No, he is not hurting the hen. You know, when the hen lays the eggs they are in a hard shell which will not let anything pass through it. But it is just as necessary for the hen's eggs to be fertilized in order to grow as it was for the flower's seeds or the frog's eggs. In order for this to be done, this fertilization must take place before the hard shell is formed. You remember those little, shell-less eggs we found in the chicken we had for dinner the other day. Well, it is before they reach even that state that they must be fertilized. As the shell forms before they leave the body, you can see that they must be fertilized while they

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still are inside the body. That is what the rooster is doing now. He is conveying some pollen or semen into the hen's body where it will reach the eggs.

Look at that rooster now. He goes strutting around as if he thought he had done something wonderful, and I think he has; for is it not wonderful that he has the power of making the eggs in the hen's body fertile or capable of hatching into chickens?

Old Blackie does not take as much care of his children as their mother does—but he helps some. Just see him! He has scratched up a fat worm and is calling to mother Fluffy-hen to bring her children to gobble it!

The mother has considerable work to do for her children; for you know

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she has to cover the eggs for three weeks before they are hatched, then she watches over the chickens until they are fully grown. She scratches and hunts worms and bugs for them to eat; she covers them at night with her warm wings, and if any enemy comes near you know she will fight for them. I guess you found that out the time you tried to take an egg from old Speckle's nest. It took a good many days for your scratches to heal, did n't it?

There, I believe we have that fence finished. Now we will see if Blackie will give us any more trouble. Let us go and play ball awhile.

An honest man is the noblest work of God.
Pope.

CHAPTER V

THE MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

THERE, I have been expecting you to ask me why human beings did not lay eggs as the flowers and birds did. Well, they do, in a way. There are eggs or ovules formed in the mother's body, but instead of laying the eggs in a nest as chickens or birds do, the mother keeps them in a nest inside her body where they stay until they are developed into the babe. At least once a month an egg or ovule ripens inside the mother's body. But in order to grow it must be fertilized, too. Of course, this must take place inside the mother's body. In order for this to

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take place the father must put some of the pollen or semen inside the mother's body. He does this with a special organ called the penis, by means of which he sends the semen into the vagina of the mother. This vagina is a tube which leads from the external parts to the womb or nest which is to contain the baby.

Every month there is an ovum or egg sent to this mother nest; at the same time there is an extra amount of blood sent there, too, to provide nourishment for the ovum if it commences to grow. But if the ovum is not fertilized it passes on out of the body through the vagina, and this extra amount of blood which is not needed now is sent out, too. We call this blood the menstrual flow. This

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flow is the sign of the possibility of motherhood, and each time it occurs the womb grows a little stronger.

A girl enters womanhood when she is about fourteen, but her body is not well enough developed so that she should bear a child for a good many years afterwards. You know that every little girl hopes to become a mother some time when she has grown to womanhood. But if she wants to have a strong, healthy child she must help her body grow strong and not do anything to injure it. We men and boys sometimes have to help girls with their tasks; for they are not built as strong as we are, and we want every girl to grow into a strong, healthy woman who is prepared to have healthy babies.

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You have noticed what a difference there is in babies; some are so strong and well while others are so weak and puny and always sick. Often this is the fault of the fathers or mothers who have neglected to take good care of their bodies or have done something that would injure them. Some day I will tell you about some diseases that some people are so unfortunate as to contract and which injure especially those parts of the body that are used in the production of children.

I have told you these things about girls; for you will hear rough boys and men make unkind remarks to or about girls. These boys have not learned the true meaning of these natural conditions and have formed a

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vulgar and often entirely wrong idea of these things. The next time we have a chance to talk I will tell you more concerning the father's part in the life story.

Nor love, nor honor, wealth nor pow'r,
Can give the heart a cheerful hour
When health is lost. Be timely wise;
With health all taste of pleasure flies.
Gay.

CHAPTER VI

THE MECHANISM OF OUR BODIES

BEFORE I tell you more about the father's part I will explain the structure of the male organs. First, there are the testicles, which are two ball-shaped organs enclosed in a sac called the scrotum. It is in these organs that the pollen or semen, as it is called, is formed. After this fluid is manufactured it is sent through tiny tubes to be stored in some little reservoirs called the seminal vesicles, which are inside the body cavity. Here it remains until it is time to send it out of the body. Then it is sent through other tubes

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to the penis, which sends it into the mother's body so it can fertilize the ovule. If a man is strong and well there is just enough of this fluid formed to keep the little reservoirs full all the time. Of course, if a man wasted this semen, the supply might be exhausted when the semen was most needed. Then, too, if he wasted much of it, the testicles would be overworked trying to keep up a supply, and you know that any organ that is overworked is liable to wear out.

This semen begins to form in a boy's body when he is about fourteen, but for a number of years it is needed in his own body. For there is a peculiar thing about semen: not only will it fertilize ovules, but it is

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necessary to the growth of the boy. About the time that this fluid begins to be secreted in the testicles there are other changes taking place in the boy's body. All these changes are the indications that the boy is becoming a man. His voice changes and becomes deeper. While it is changing it sometimes "breaks" and makes funny, little, unexpected squeaks. Some people are so rude as to laugh at a boy. If I were you I would laugh, too, but laugh out of pure happiness, for you know that squeak means your voice is changing into a man's voice. About this time the beard makes its first appearance. Hair appears on other parts of the body and the body generally becomes stronger and heavier built. The se-

cretions of the testicles help in this growth. If the testicles were removed the body would not develop as it should. You remember, the other evening when you were studying your history lesson you asked me what were the eunuchs. I could not explain to you very well then, because there were others around, and I preferred to wait until we were alone. Well, these eunuchs are men whose testicles were removed when they were quite young. They do not look like real men, for they are not developed the same. They do not even have a beard, and their bodies have not developed like those of other men.

But there are other men besides eunuchs who never develop as they

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should. They are men who wasted the semen when it was most needed in the development of the body. With a growing boy this fluid should remain in the seminal vesicles or reservoirs so some of it can be absorbed and assist in the growth of the boy. Sometimes boys who do not understand the use of this fluid will waste it. These boys seldom develop into strong men.

Every right action and true thought sets
the seal of its beauty on every person's face;
every wrong action and foul thought its
seal of distortion.

Ruskin.

CHAPTER VII

THE VENDORS OF FAKE ADVICE

DICK, I hear you are going away to school next week. I suppose that will end our trips and talks for awhile. As there are a number of things I had intended to tell you some day, and as I may not be near when the right time comes, I feel that I must warn you about several things that you are bound to encounter, so you will be well armed to fight. Many boys and men, too, get into trouble because of their ignorance. You remember that article we read the other evening about the man who sold fake mining stock

to many old people, and so really stole all their savings. At his trial he had the hardihood to laugh about it, and called his poor dupes "easy marks." Well, mining stock is not the only fake thing that is sold. There are some men who sell legitimate mining stock and there are others who sell only fake stock. It is just the same in any business or in any profession, there are good and bad people everywhere. You always have had a great deal of respect for your old family physician, and well you might have, for he is a man anyone can respect. I consider we are quite fortunate in this town, for we have a fine lot of physicians.

Unfortunately, in some cities there are a few unscrupulous doctors

whose only aim is to make money. These doctors are as bad as that mine promoter, for they sell fake advice. And would you believe it, their easiest dupes are young men! Let me tell you how some of them work. One man conducts a museum where are shown pictures of the human body. Various conditions are pictured which are claimed to indicate certain diseases. One of the most common is a picture showing the left testicle hanging a little lower than the right. That is a natural condition, but the boy does not know it, so imagines there must be something wrong with him. He sees near this picture a card saying, "Visit our house physician, who is a specialist in diseases of men." He follows the

suggestion and is led to believe he has a serious ailment which needs treatment; so he is led on until his money is all gone. Then he is discharged.

Another natural condition that is used to promote business is nocturnal emissions, or night losses. You know that if a stream of water were allowed to run into a tank the tank at times would become full and would overflow. It is the same with the seminal vesicles or reservoirs. At times they become overful and so Nature causes some of the semen to be discharged at night. This is spoken of as "night losses." It is a natural condition and need not cause any alarm if it occurs once or twice a week or rarely more often. Its

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frequency will be diminished by not allowing the mind to dwell on it and by discarding some of the bed clothing so as not to be so warm at night. However, this natural condition is used in advertisements to make unsuspecting young men think they are drifting into a dangerous condition. If the young man at the same time experiences some of the natural nervous conditions he is an almost sure prey for these sheep in lamb's clothing, vultures in the guise of physicians, who advertise under the head of "weak men," "lost manhood," etc.

Another common symptom which these unscrupulous men use to promote their nefarious business is pimples. Nearly every boy (and girl,

too) has pimples some time during his life. Most young men have pimples on their faces about the time the beard commences to grow. This usually is due to the change which is taking place in the nervous system and will pass away in a short time; sometimes it is a result of indigestion. But these quack doctors claim the pimples come from "night losses" or self-abuse, and use them as a source of considerable revenue.

Other symptoms used to frighten young men are the various nervous conditions, such as blushing, embarrassment in the presence of others, especially ladies. Every human being at the age of development is troubled with these nervous conditions. They are natural and will

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pass away as soon as the body is developed. The best treatment is to forget them by filling the mind with other thoughts.

There, I think I have said enough about these unscrupulous physicians. You usually will be able to know them, because they advertise. Reliable physicians do not advertise. There possibly may be a few good physicians among the advertisers, but as a rule an advertising physician should be shunned as a snake in the grass. If you need any treatment, go to your family physician. He can treat you as well, if not better, than those men who claim to be men specialists. Their specialty usually is in obtaining money from their dupes.

No one is free who is not master of himself.
Shakespeare.

CHAPTER VIII

REAL MEN WHO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING

THERE are some other things I must tell you, Dick, so you will be better posted on these matters than some with whom you come in contact. Every boy dislikes to be considered "green," or lacking in ability to do things other boys do. He hates to display any ignorance on subjects about which other boys appear to be well posted. Because of this, frequently he puts on an appearance of bravado and tries to appear "wise." In order not to show ignorance of certain things he

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often is led to do things which he would not do if he understood the possible results. No boy ever wilfully did anything that would injure his health or have a harmful effect upon his future. Diseases are contracted and bad habits established as a result of ignorance or wrong information derived from doubtful sources.

There are some men and boys who seem to delight in getting a boy started wrong. They try to fill his mind with vile thoughts and stories. You have encountered some of these men and you will encounter many others. I am sure you realize that the men who have time to tell vile stories are not the successful men of the world. They waste their en-

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ergies. They remind me of the soap-box orator. Every town has some men who sit around in a crowd and talk about how the government should be run and what the president should do. One would think to hear these men talk that they were able to solve the problems of the universe. The truth of the matter is they cannot solve their own family affairs, for often the wives of such men must take in washing to provide food for their children. You will notice that the men who do things in this world are the men who conserve their energies. They do not waste their time by useless ranting. They keep still, study and "saw wood." Before long the silent man blossoms into a talented leader,

while the garrulous man is still occupying the soap-box.

Well, I started out to explain that some of these men delight in telling vile stories to boys and in picturing the delights of certain immoral acts. Just remember the source of these stories and I do not think you will want to follow their advice nor listen to their undignified tales and thus run the risk of becoming as they are.

Some of these men, or perhaps some older boys among your school-mates, will try to tell you that massage of the penis or self-abuse will give you a great deal of pleasure. But the degrading pleasure is spoiled by the thought that you are ruining your nervous system and making it

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impossible for you to become a man among men. Not only by these acts is the semen wasted which might help in the growth of the body, but the massage causes an irritation of the nerves which is telegraphed to other stations. This act of irritating the sexual organ is called masturbation, or self-abuse, for the boy is abusing his own body. The result, if continued, will be a ruined nervous system. If you already have practiced this, stop! It is not too late if you stop immediately!

Just here I must tell you something more about these men specialists. Many a boy abuses himself before he is aware of the possible consequences. When he does awaken to a realization, he is frightened

for fear he has ruined his future health. Just now the unscrupulous physician gets in his work, for he makes the boy think that a long course of treatment is absolutely necessary. As a result, the boy pays him all his money, worries himself half sick, and finally is discharged worse off than before. Now all that might have been avoided if the boy had gone to a physician who would tell him the truth. A truthful physician will tell such a boy that he can cure himself and that indeed his cure depends upon himself.

The treatment is first to stop the practice, then take a great deal of exercise in the open air, eat nourishing food without condiments or spices, sleep on a hard bed and do not have

MEN WHO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING

too much bed clothing, then fill your mind full of other thoughts. When you feel a desire to resort to the old practice, get up and fill your mind and hands full of some work or pastime. It never is too late to commence this treatment. Of course, some cases take longer than others to cure, and it may be a long time before the abused nervous system is entirely restored; but every case can be cured if the boy is persistent. Every man has burned his finger several times; but, having burned his finger, he proceeds to bandage it and let Nature repair the injury. He does not worry about the possible after-effects. But he would not deliberately burn his finger again after he knows the danger. It is the same

with self-abuse. Many boys practice this before they know the dangers. That should not cause them unnecessary worry if they stop the practice. Nature will repair many wrongs if we give her a chance.

In young boys this practice of self-abuse often is caused from the irritation of a tight prepuce or foreskin. In many cases a circumcision takes away the desire for this practice. This can be performed by any good physician. Sometimes this irritation is caused by an accumulation of smegma which is formed around the glans. Daily cleansing of these parts is a necessity to health and cleanliness. The foreskin or prepuce should be pulled back and the parts thoroughly cleansed.

Use thy youth as the springtime, wherein
thou oughtest to plan and sow all provisions
for a long and happy life.

Walter Raleigh.

CHAPTER IX

SOWING WILD OATS

BEFORE you have been at school very long you will be invited by some of your companions to “go out and see the town,” or to visit the “red light” districts, those plagues that should be shunned by every self-respecting man or boy. I hope you will have the manhood to refuse to go, but at any rate I want you to know the dangers of such a trip.

The great danger is the contraction of one of the black plagues, or the venereal diseases, as they are called by physicians. Nearly every

woman who leads an immoral life has had one of these diseases and the men who visit her are very liable to contract one. The prostitute may show you a statement from a physician saying that he has found her free from disease. Perhaps he did, but she may have contracted one ten minutes later. Anyway, the quick examination made by physicians of such people is no guarantee of freedom from disease which may exist but be covered up—hidden, as it were, in ambush, ready to spring out on the first unsuspecting victim who approaches.

The most common of these diseases is gonorrhea, or clap, as it sometimes is called. It is estimated that a large percentage of the men

SOWING WILD OATS

in the world have contracted this disease some time during their lives, and the majority of them contract it before their twentieth year—before they are cognizant of its disastrous results. Its wide distribution is due, no doubt, to the ignorance as to its possible consequences. Formerly it was not considered to be any worse than a cold, which all men must expect and endure some time. It is only during comparatively recent years that much has been known of its frightful ravages. Now it is known that about seventy per cent of the blindness in the world and forty per cent of the operations upon women are due to this dread plague. In the majority of these cases the husband and father had

“sown some wild oats” and contracted this disease in his youth. He considered himself cured; but after marriage the disease, which all the time had been lurking in the deeper tissues, made itself manifest, with the result that it was communicated to his wife. As an outcome, she perhaps had to submit to the mutilation of her body by an operation to save her life, or the baby’s eyes were infected during birth, and it became permanently blind. What a price for a man to pay for a few moments of questionable pleasure!

The other disease, syphilis, effects the blood, and therefore all parts of the body. Although not usually causing death in its earlier stages, it frequently is at the bottom of many

SOWING WILD OATS

obscure cases of brain and nerve diseases. Your family physician could give you many instances of death traceable to this disease. Many a brilliant man has been stricken with paralysis in the height of his career. His family physician alone knows the cause.

There is another result of these diseases that is not known by the majority of men. That is sterility. No man likes to feel that he is incapable of producing healthy offspring, yet that is what may happen to a victim of one of these diseases. It is estimated that twenty-five per cent of the childless homes are due to the lack of ability of the man, due to sterility following one of these diseases. Although he apparently

TRUTHS

may be able to perform his part in the production of offspring, yet his efforts are valueless, for the spermatozoa, or life-giving part of the semen, are dead, killed by an inflammation caused by one of these diseases.

I cannot understand how a man with any self-respect can take the risk of contracting one of these diseases and of ruining his future happiness for a few moments of questionable pleasure. Every normal man hopes some time to have a home, wife and children. He should begin early to prepare for them.

Now I am going to tell you that there is a possibility of a person contracting one of these loathsome diseases by the use of public towels,

SOWING WILD OATS

drinking cups, pencils, etc. So I hope you always will have your own personal property. Neither borrow nor lend these personal things. If it were not for the serious risks it would be comical to watch people drinking from a public cup. So many people seem to have the idea that they are the only ones to use the portion nearest the handle. Fortunately, many authorities are taking up this matter. Some of the railroads and many of the states now prohibit the use of public cups. That is one step towards the suppression of these vile diseases.

Many of the grave results of these diseases might have been avoided if the victim had obtained prompt and adequate treatment. So many young

men who contract these diseases have a feeling of shame that prevents them from visiting their family physician. They try to treat themselves upon the advice of their friends or the nearest druggist. As a result, they do not have the best treatment and often discontinue it before the disease is entirely cured. The quack doctors and the patent medicine vendors reap a harvest from these youths. If these boys only could be made to realize that their family physicians are their best friends and can be trusted to give them the best treatment and will not violate the confidence reposed in them!

The world is eager to employ
Not just one, but every boy
Who, with a purpose staunch and true,
Will greet the work he finds to do.
Honest, faithful, earnest, kind,—
To good, awake; to evil, blind;—
A heart of gold without alloy.
Wanted—The world wants such a boy.
Nixon Waterman.

CHAPTER X

GOOD-BY

WELL, good-by, Dick. Here's hoping you may enjoy every moment of your time at school and come home stronger both physically and mentally.

We have had some great trips and talks this summer. I hope you have enjoyed them as much as I have. In our conversations I have told you a great many things about yourself and about the temptations you would meet—the spiders who would try to lure you to their webs. I am very anxious that you should grow to manhood strong and well, with no regrets because of past follies.

We all make many mistakes. But the worst mistakes are made through ignorance. When you were a babe I determined that you, my namesake, never should be able to say with so many men, "Why was I not warned of these dangers before it was too late?" If other temptations should appear, do not be afraid to go to some trustworthy man and ask his advice. It is only the foolish man or the very young man who is unwilling to display his ignorance. The wise man obtains all the knowledge possible, both from men and books, before he makes any important decision or takes any risk. If you get in a tight place do not be afraid to write and tell me all about it. I will not condone any wrong, but I will

give you the best advice I can, the same as I would throw a rope to the foolish but venturesome boy who swam beyond his depth.

So here's good-by until next we meet, when I expect to see you a man's boy in the truest sense of the term—a boy who will some day be a leader of men, a great power for the good of humanity, as I know you will be.



By E. B. LOWRY, M. D.

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